Week 4 - Search & Explore the Internet

Class Objectives

You should leave today with the ability to:

- Take advantage of the materials available for checkout from the library (books, videos, etc.)
- Use your library card to access thousands of journals, reference materials and encyclopedias from trusted sources NOT available from Google or other search engines
- Get your Web search started using the library's list of recommended Web sites
- Distinguish between a directory and a search engine
    - Use a directory to browse for Web sites on a particular topic/subject
    - Use a search engine to locate relevant Web sites according to specific search terms
- Limit your search results
- Evaluate the quality of a Web site

Find Information Using the Library's Web Site

The Online Catalog
When you visit the library's Web site (http://library.fauquiercounty.gov), look under **Find Information** and choose **Find Books, DVDs…**. This will take you to http://innopac.fauquiercounty.gov, the library's catalog, which is available 24X7 with any Internet connection.

- Search for books, DVDs, CDs; place holds to pick up and check out.
- Use our **Advanced Search** to limit your search to format (DVD, for example).
- Check out the **Book Lists & Bibliographies**, which provide suggested items on specific topics/subjects.
- **New to the Collection** and **This Week's Top Choices** (which you can get delivered to your e-mail) let you know what's new.
- Log in to your online account to keep track of items placed on hold, items checked out, fines, etc.
- Enjoy audio books (CD books)? Consider setting up a *NetLibrary* account to access eBooks and eAudiobooks from home. eAudiobooks can be downloaded to your computer or iPod/mp3 player.

Articles and Databases
When you visit the library's Web site (http://library.fauquiercounty.gov), look under **Find Information** and choose **Search for Articles & More**. This will take you to a list of links to numerous online databases, which are available 24X7 with your library card and any Internet connection.

- Many scholarly journals and other commercial publications are not available freely on the Internet, i.e., "Googling" may give you a citation/reference, but not the full-text of the article.
- Information provided by online databases are from trusted, reliable sources versus someone's blog post, etc.
- Some library databases can only be accessed in the library (no library card needed when you access a database w/in any FC library), i.e., AncestryLibrary and some of our financial databases.

- The Foundation Center databases are only available at the Bealeton branch.

Recommended Web Sites

When you visit the library's Web site (http://library.fauquiercounty.gov), look under **Find Information** and choose **Recommended Web Sites**. Here you will find a list of Web sites arranged by subject that library reference staff often reference when answering reference questions or getting patrons started on their research.

Search Engines vs. Directories vs. Portals

When to Use a General Directory

Web directories group Web sites by topic. The information in a directory is usually selected and sorted by a human intermediary. Web directories are a good starting place when you have a very general question or when you don't quite know where to go with a broad topic and would like to browse down through a category to get some guidance. You browse the directory versus inputting search terms/keywords to get results.

Examples of a directory:
- http://dir.yahoo.com
- http://www.dmoz.org (Google points to this)

When to Use Search Engines

If your topic is very specific or you expect that very little is written on it, a search engine (Google, Ask.com, etc.) will be a much better starting place than a directory. If you need to be exhaustive, use a search engine. If your topic is a combination of three or more concepts (e.g., "Italian" "paintings" "Haseltine"), use a search engine.

Example of a search engine: http://google.com

In the major search engines and many other search sites, when you enter terms, only those records (Web pages) that contain all those terms will be retrieved, and the engine will automatically rank the order of output based on various criteria.

Strategies for better search results:

1. Be as specific as possible in your search terms. If you're looking for information on beagles, enter "beagles," not "dogs."
2. Use Boolean Operators (if allowed by the search engine) such as AND, OR and NOT when constructing your search.
3. Certain symbols, including the "wildcard" (*), quotation marks for phrases and the (+) and (-) symbols, can help limit your search.
4. Most major search engines allow you to limit your results by type/format. For example, if you want images of Beagles, you'd select Google's Image Search and limit your results that way.

There are also specialized search engines that may target a specific audience (nettrekker.com for students/educators) or present results in a unique way (www.clusty.com).

Assessing the Quality of Content

Once you've come up with a list of search results (or a category in a directory), you will want to evaluate whether the information is legitimate. Here are some things to consider…

1. Watch out for "Sponsored Links"
2. Consider the source. From what organization does the content originate? Look for the organization identified both on the Web page itself and at the URL. Is the content identified as coming from known sources such as a nonprofit organization (.org), a commercial site (.com), an academic institution (.edu) or a government entity (.gov)?
3. Consider the site's purpose (e-commerce versus informational)
4. Quality – Is the writing coherent, proper grammar, etc.?
5. Is the site and its contents as current as it should be?

Search Tips

Try and be as specific as possible – include all relevant keywords in your search (hometown name + newspaper versus just typing the word "news").

If you input multiple keywords in a search, the engine will automatically append "AND" between each word – assumes you want results/web pages with all those words, i.e., type in the words "cats dogs" to get results that cover cats and dogs on the same site.

If you want to expand your search and get one or more of the words you type in the results, so web sites on cats or dogs, put the word "OR" between words.

If you want the exact wording/phrase, surround the phrase with quotation marks, i.e., "bad to the bone."

If there are words you don't want to show up, you can put NOT between the words or a minus sign at the beginning of the word you don't want, i.e., "mother NOT Theresa" or "mother –Theresa."

You can also narrow your search to just images, news, maps, etc. on most search engines.

If you are searching for something very specific, you will want to use a search engine focused on that, i.e., a job search engine if you're only looking for employment (versus just using Google).

Explore the "Advanced Search" features of the search engine you're using to get the best results.

Helpful Web Sites

- Web Search Strategies in Plain English - **http://www.commoncraft.com/search**
- Google Search Basics - **http://www.google.com/support/websearch/bin/answer.py? answer=136861**
- NoodleTools Search Tips - **http://www.noodletools.com/debbie/literacies/information/5 locate/adviceengine.html**
- The OWL at Purdue: Searching the World Wide Web - **http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/558/01/**

- Search Engine Watch Web Searching Tips - **http://searchenginewatch.com/facts**